

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

UNCLAS STATE 178019

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM NOUAKCHOTT DATED JULY 13, 1978
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

UNCLAS NOUAKCHOTT 1869

DEPT PLEASEPASS OFD POSTS AS NECESSARY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT MR

SUBJ: COUP D'ETAT IN MAURITANIA: SITREP 1. 1000Z JULY 10

REF:NOUAKCHOTT 1859

1. HERE FOLLOWS WHAT EMBASSY HAS BEEN ABLE TO LEARN TO DATE ABOUT
APPARENTLY SUCCESSFUL COUP D'ETAT
WHICH BEGAN IN EARLY MORNING HOURS JULY 10. TA. AS EARLY AS 0500Z JULY
18 AIR MAURITANIE CREW WHICH WAS ABOARD
ITS PLANE READY TO DEPART NOUAKCHOTT FOR SOUTHERN MAURETANIAN TOWN OF
KAEDI WAS APPROACHED BY MILITARY ATEP AND PLACED UNDER ARREST IN AIR--
PORT. CREW REPORTED THAT MILITARY MEN CUT TELEPHONE LINES FROM AIRPORT

B. AT 0715Z, EMBOFFS PROCEEDING TO AIRPORT FOR PRIVATE PLANE FLIGHT
TO NORTHERN MAURITANIA OBSERVED THAT ROADS AND KEY POINTS WERE BEING
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HEAVILY PATROLLED AND GUARDED BY ARMY. EMBOFFS REACHED AIRPORT TO
LEARN THAT IT WAS CLOSED TO TRAFFIC. IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER THEY
WERE PLACED UNDER LOOSE ARREST WITH OTHER PASSENGERS AND AIRPORT
9**8:8-).

PEOPLE ARRIVING AT AIRPORT SUBSEQUENTLY WERE ALSO ARRESTED.
EMBOFFS REMAINED AT AIRPORT UNTIL 0915A WHEN ARMY OFFICER ARRIVED
TO RELEASE ALL THOSE BEING HELD.

C. AT 0800Z RADIO MAURITANIA, WHICH HAD BEEN OFF AIR, BEGAN BROADCASTING MARTIAL MUSIC AND AT 0820 ISSUED COMMUNIQUE IN FRENCH AND ARABIC SAYING THAT:J

CORRUPT AND ANTINATIONAL REGIME ENDED AND ARMED FORCES, CHARGED AS LAST RESORT WITH MAINTAINING NATIONAL LEGITIMACY, HAVE SEIZED POWER. THIS DONE TO SAVE COUNTRY FROM DISMEMBERMENT.

II. CONSTITUTION, PARLIAMENT, PARTY AND ALL ITS ORGANISMS ARE DISSOLVED, AND MILITARY COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL RECTIFICATION HAS TAKEN ALL POWERS UNTIL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS CAN BE PUT IN PLACE. NEW GOVT WILL BE FORMED SOON.

III. COMMITTEE DECLARES SOLEMNLY THAT IT WILL RESPECT ALL ENGAGEMENTS OF MAURITANIAN STATE VIS A VIS OUTSIDE WORLD, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,

AS WELL AS RELATIONS WITH BROTHERLY AND FRIENDLY COUNTRIES.

IV. UN, OAU, AND ARAB LEAGUE CHARTERS WILL BE RESPECTED AS WILL LIFE AND PROPERTY OF FOREIGNERS LIVING IN MAURITANIA.

V. CITIZENS ASKED TO REMAIN CALM AND LISTEN TO INSTRUCTIONS WHICH WILL BE GIVEN SUBSEQUENTLY.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE APPARATUS IN INTERIOR OF COUNTRY SHOULD CONTINUE TO FUNCTION NORMALLY. FOR NOUAKCHOTT, PROGRAM FOR RETURN TO WORK WILL BE PUBLISHED.

D. EMBOFFS AT AIRPORT HEARD ONE OR TWO SHOTS FIRED, AND SOME SHOOTING MAY HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN CITY. HOWEVER, CITY IS NOW APPARENTLY CALM. WE UNDERSTAND FRENCH RADIO HAS ANNOUNCED THAT PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH IS BEING HELD SOMEWHERE WITHIN COUNTRY. CABINET MINISTERS ARE BELIEVED UNCLASSIFIED

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ED

UNDER HOUSE ARREST.

E. APPARENTLY BECAUSE OF ITS CLOSE PROXIMITY TO PRESIDENCY, EMBASSY IS UNDER ARMY GUARD AND PASSAGE IN AND OUT DENIED. MOVEMENT IN

REST OF CITY, NOTABLE AT AID OFFICES, IS FREER.

FRONTIERS AND AIRPORT REMAIN CLOSED.

2. ALL AMERICANS IN MAURITANIA BELIEVED SAFE AND WELL. KRYZA

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